



11 April 1979

Mr. Stephen R. Conn
611 Argyle Road
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230

Dear Mr. Conn:

It was good talking with you today. I am forwarding under separate cover copies of a current issue for one date of our DAILY REPORT, which includes the editorial material from field bureaus which I referred to. I am also enclosing a copy of my letter to Dean Abel which gives some additional information on the project we have had in mind.

Thinking about our phone discussion, I would like to suggest that we plan to do it in two weeks, which should include a day or so to enable you to write a report on your observations and recommendations. This would enable you to spend some time with each of the DAILY REPORT volumes to get a feel for the problems and the activities of our DAILY REPORT editors. I believe your views, as an outsider, would be most interesting.

I would have no problem considering someone from Washington, as you suggested, but would of course like to know the qualifications of the individual. If you yourself come from New York, we should include travel costs and per diem of \$50.00, the current rate for Washington, in addition to your usual fee, in the contract.

I would appreciate your dropping me a note as to confirmation of your fee, a brief resume of your background in terms of qualifications, and any other questions or suggestions you might have in approaching this matter. I will then get in touch with the contracting people and have a contract drafted for your approval.

Best regards,

Chief, Operations Group

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Enclosure

Distribution:

- Orig - Addressee w/enc
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29 January 1979

Mr. Elie Abel
Dean of the Faculty of Journalism
Graduate School of Journalism
Columbia University
New York, N.Y. 10027

Dear Mr. Abel:

The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), on whose behalf I write, is a U.S. Government component under the administration of the Central Intelligence Agency which publishes reports containing information collected and translated worldwide from foreign broadcasts and newspapers. You may be familiar with some of our eight volumes of material published daily, totaling some 200,000 words each weekday, and distributed to more than 5,000 consumers, both in government and the public. Many of our public subscribers are journalists, foreign governments, libraries, etc.

As you can imagine we have quite a problem editing and producing such a high volume daily publication. We are using approximately 35 editors, who review and compile materials received by teletype from field bureaus. The editing is done manually. But--like many commercial publishers--we are concerned about how we do our work in light of increasing cost and personnel limitations.

I am anxious to take a close look at several aspects of our editorial work to answer such questions as:

- + Are we employing the best copy-editing craft? (Specifically, are we over-editing?)
- + Can our editorial procedures be streamlined to involve fewer people without suffering loss of quality?
- + Can there be a meshing of our 24-hour Wire Service with our publication editing?
- + Are we giving the right kind of training to our editorial recruits?
- + Are we structured properly in terms of getting the greatest productivity while retaining some specialized background knowledge?

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- + Are we properly supporting our editors with references aids, library facilities, etc.?

- + What is the best method for insuring quality control?

To address these questions we would be interested in securing the services of someone from academia or commercial journalism, on a short-term contract, who could take a look at our editorial process and suggest improvements. Would you be able to suggest a person who might be interested in such a contract? I would imagine we are talking along the lines of about four weeks.

I would be grateful for any suggestion you might make.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Chief, Operations Group

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